

Against the Grain

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Charleston Conference 2009: 29th Annual Issues in Books and Serial Acquisition

Editor

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2009 Charleston Conference — 29th Annual Issues in Book and Serial Acquisition

Call For Papers, Ideas, Conference Themes, Panels, Debates, Diatribes, Speakers, Poster Sessions, Preconferences, etc. ...

2009 Theme — There's a Whole Lot of Changin' Goin' On!

Wednesday, November 4, 2009 — Preconferences and Vendor Showcase
Thursday-Saturday, November 5-7, 2009 — Main Conference
Francis Marion Hotel & Embassy Suites Historic District, Charleston, SC

If you are interested in leading a discussion, acting as a moderator, coordinating a lively lunch, or would like to make sure we discuss a particular topic, please let us know. The **Charleston Conference** prides itself on creativity, innovation, flexibility, and informality. If there is something you are interested in doing, please try it out on us. We'll probably love it...

The Conference Directors for the **2009 Charleston Conference** include — **Beth Bernhardt**, Principal Director (UNC-Greensboro) <beth_bernhardt@uncg.edu>, **Glenda Alvin** <galvin@tstate.edu>, **Cris Ferguson** (Furman University) <cris.ferguson@furman.edu>, **David Goodman** <dgoodman@princeton.edu>, **Chuck Hamaker** <cahamake@email.uncc.edu>, **Heidi Hoerman** <hoerman@sc.edu>, **Tony Horava** (University of Ottawa) <thorava@uottawa.ca>, **Ramune Kubilius** (Northwestern Health Sciences Library) <r-kubilius@northwestern.edu>, **Corrie Marsh** <cmarsh12@hotmail.com>, **Heather Miller** (SUNY-Albany) <hmiller@uamail.albany.edu>, **Jack Montgomery** (Western Kentucky University) <jack.montgomery@wku.edu>, **Audrey Powers** (UFS Tampa Library) <apowers@lib.usf.edu>, **John Perry Smith** (Total Information Inc.) <jps@totalinformation.com>, **Anthony Watkinson** (Consultant) <anthony.watkinson@btopenworld.com>, **Katina Strauch** (College of Charleston) <kstrauch@comcast.net> or www.katina.info/conference.

Send ideas by **July 31, 2009**, to any of the Conference Directors listed above.

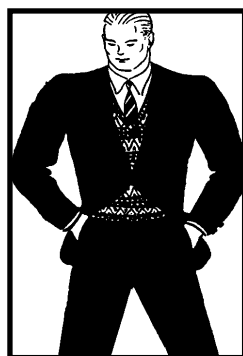
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Pelikan's Antidisambiguation — Emerging Technologies

by **Michael P. Pelikan** (Penn State) <mpp10@psu.edu>

Hello — This column's name stems from the fact that I stand firmly, as a matter of principle, against "*disambiguation*." If *disambiguation* is a word, then there must be a verb somewhere (in the infinitive), "*to ambiguate*." If that is true, then I missed something somewhere. If there is no such verb, then why must we hear of it? At any event, I'm against it, and therefore, my position is one of *Antidisambiguation*.



This column will discuss **emerging technologies**. Amidst the marketing hype, the techno-babble, and the outrageous and continuing generation of *terms-nouvelles*, there are sometimes deep currents at work: trends that we overlook at our peril.

Column #1 — "Sell 'em the Razor, Then sell 'em the Blades, too!"

Ever-present on **Amazon's** home page, but not-so-commonly-actually-seen, **Amazon's Kindle** has crept into a moment of prominence in the mainstream attention span lately. The reason? **Amazon** has announced the **Kindle 2**.

In the meantime, **Sony** introduced a new

version of their **Reader** quite recently (the **PRS-700**), appearing to respond to user feedback through the inclusion of a backlighting system for the now touch-sensitive screen.

The original **Kindle** and **Sony's PRS-505** (PRS stands for "Portable Reader System"), have been in general circulation for well over a year. Yet even now, to be caught actually using one is to invite comment or questions such as, "Is that one of those eBook readers?" (No, it's a bacon, lettuce, and tomato sandwich.) How do you like it?" (I love it. In fact, I was reading on it when you interrupted me...)

Working in **Penn State's Emerging Technologies Group**, I have spent quite a bit of time with both the **Kindle** and the **Sony Reader**. While that both **Amazon** and **Sony** seem to be concentrating on the individual user, widespread personal adoption may present us with organizational or institutional possibilities. Gazing into the crystal ball, what might we see for institutional and library support and services? There's much to discuss here. In this first column I'll take a look at the po-

sitioning going on as **Amazon** and **Sony** vie for the personal market. Next time, I'll go deeper into how such devices, and others, *and the content they all feed on*, might fit into our existing and emerging institutional information infrastructures.

A genuine old-fashioned book-loving book lover, I have found both the **Kindle** and the **Sony Reader** to be absolutely wonderful. Most remarkable is the degree of verisimilitude they both achieve — you quickly forget the device itself, thanks in large part to the component they have in common: the amazing **electrophoretic** display from **E Ink Corporation**.

The **Sony Reader** lacks the wireless delivery of content (via **Sprint's** cellular network) that lies at the center of the **Kindle's** feature set. You have to connect the **Sony Reader** to a computer to move content onto it.

The real question is this: **why are these devices still rare enough to attract comment when seen in public?**

Both **Amazon** and **Sony**, it appears to me, have chosen to target their marketing efforts for eBook readers at the typical member of the "Brie and Chablis" crowd. Who is this person? He or she is an affluent, frequently traveling professional, a book-lover who listens to **NPR**,

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